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LETTER DATED 25 AUGUST 1992 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the message of Mr. Tofik Gassymov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic, as received by telex.

I should be grateful if the text of this letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hassan A. HASSANOV
Permanent Representative

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Annex

[Original: Russian]

Message dated 24 August 1992 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan

On behalf of the Azerbaijani Government, I have the honour to inform you of the current status of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Armenia, making a State policy of its plan to take over foreign territory, is openly continuing its armed aggression against Azerbaijan. The Armenian armed forces have carried out military operations along the entire length of the frontier between Armenia and Azerbaijan and have treacherously penetrated Azerbaijani territory, seizing the province of Lachin and the cities of Shusha, Yukhary-Askipara, Barkhudarly and Kiarka.

In flagrant violation of the State sovereignty of the Azerbaijani Republic, Armenia has established what it calls the "humanitarian corridor of Lachin", which it is using for military purposes in order to continue its expansion inside Azerbaijani territory. Transfers of weapons and troops from Armenian territory to the Armenian separatists in Azerbaijan, whose activities are aimed at the collapse of the Azerbaijani State, continue unabated.

For all these reasons, the Azerbaijani Republic has been compelled to take the necessary measures to exercise its right of self-defence and re-establish its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Azerbaijan has never violated and will never violate the frontiers of a neighbouring State.

As a member of the United Nations and of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), Azerbaijan has on many occasions affirmed that it has no claims on the territory of any State whatsoever and that it is firmly resolved to base its policy on United Nations and CSCE principles.

As a proponent of the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, Azerbaijan has from the start of the conflict been doing everything possible to bring the other party to the negotiating table. All kinds of conciliatory steps have been taken to facilitate a peaceful settlement. Even after the capture of Shusha and Lachin by the Armenian armed forces, Azerbaijan carried on peace talks and attended the Rome meeting of the CSCE with the intention of paving the way for the CSCE Peace Conference in Minsk.

The settlement of any conflict presupposes agreement and cooperation. The success of the peace process depends above all on the sincere intention of the parties to the conflict to further the process and to fulfil the obligations they have assumed.

There can, however, be no denying that the Republic of Armenia has chosen to draw out the negotiations in order to gain time so as to seize control, by political as well as military means, of the Azerbaijani territories it is occupying.

Despite everything, Azerbaijan remains determined to follow the road of a peaceful settlement of this dispute and to help in every possible way to further the process of negotiation within the CSCE framework, given the new role and new functions of this regional organization, as approved and confirmed by the Heads of State and Government of 52 countries at the recent Summit Meeting held in Helsinki.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the peaceful settlement process within the CSCE framework has already achieved results, even though the Armenian party has repeatedly declared the CSCE to be inoperative. On 24 August 1992, with a view to pursuing the negotiations on the conclusion of a cease-fire agreement, which both Azerbaijan and Armenia have said they support, the Chairman of the CSCE Peace Conference in Minsk, Mario Rafaelli, and the Head of the CSCE Cease-fire Observer Group, Heikki Happonen, came to the region with a specific proposal for the establishment of a 60-day cease-fire on the basis of studies done by the CSCE, outlining in particular the mechanisms for observing the cease-fire.

I hope that the Republic of Armenia will ultimately assume its obligations as a member of the CSCE and that the cease-fire process, begun on 9 July by the Azerbaijani Republic but interrupted by the Republic of Armenia, can continue and serve as a basis for a peaceful settlement, the main stages of which have been defined in decisions of the Council of Ministers and Committee of High Officials of the CSCE.

The Azerbaijani Republic attaches great importance to the efforts made by the United Nations to help resolve the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, namely, its sending of two missions to the region by the United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and the endorsement of the CSCE actions by the Security Council. This has unquestionably strengthened our conviction that a peaceful settlement can be achieved within the framework of the CSCE and has led us to focus our efforts on expanding the results already obtained in the context of this regional organization.

It is my hope that our dialogue will continue. Accept, Sir, etc.

(Signed) T. GASSYMOV
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Azerbaijani Republic